

Abstract

A method and apparatus is presented for burying a hidden data stream into a combined network data stream. In the preferred embodiment, the network data stream is an MPEG-2 type video data stream, and the hidden data stream is embedded so that it is neither readily detectable nor easily removable from the network data stream. A home gateway having a wireless transceiver communicates with appliances in the home via this network data stream. The hidden data stream can be embedded with a main data stream either by the content provider or by the gateway in the home. At the appliance, the hidden stream can be removed and is presented to or used by the user in a way appropriate for the appliance. Instructions as to how the hidden stream is to be presented on the appliance can be embedded into the hidden stream itself. The hidden data stream can be further used to control access to and control the content of the rest of the network data stream. Revenue generated by allowing access to the hidden data stream can be utilized to subsidize the cost of the wireless network components.